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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 10 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia concerning the fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions, held on 4 March 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Lomaia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 10 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions

The fifteenth round of the Geneva talks was held on 4 March 2011, where the issues of security and stability in Georgia's occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and the safe and dignified return of the IDPs and refugees to the places of their habitual residence were discussed. Meetings of the two working groups were held, in which participants took part in an individual capacity. Deliberations were moderated by the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and attended by the participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States. The Head of the provisional administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District, Mr. Dimitri Sanakoev, and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, Mr. Giorgi Baramia, took part in the fifteenth round of the Geneva talks. Representatives of the proxy regimes from Tskhinvali and Sokhumi also participated in the working groups.

During the fifteenth round, the Georgian side raised the issues announced in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, made on 2 March 2011. Despite the calls from the participants from Tbilisi and the co-Chairs, the Russian Federation refused yet again to undertake the obligation not to use force against Georgia, thus reciprocating the unilateral non-use of force obligation undertaken by the President of Georgia. The Georgian side again raised the necessity for the de-occupation of the country and the full withdrawal of the Russian troops from the occupied regions in accordance with Russia's ceasefire obligation. In a well-known fashion, the representatives from Moscow once again negated their obligations under the 12 August ceasefire agreement. No progress was observed in the Working Group II either, where the continuous requests of the participants from Tbilisi to agree to the principles regulating safe and dignified return of the IDPs to their homes were met with outright rejection by Moscow and its clients.

Despite the lack of progress in the fifteenth round of the Geneva discussions, the Georgian side continues to hope that some positive steps, related to the gradual establishment of international security arrangements on the ground and the implementation of the relevant confidence- and security-building measures, could be taken during the forthcoming sessions. Issues such as freedom of movement across the occupation line, go-and-see and come-and-see visits, the protection of human rights in the occupied territories, and the preservation of the cultural heritage, as well as full utilization of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs), could be agreed on in Geneva and concrete decisions benefiting the concerned populations could be taken. Georgia highly appreciates the efforts of the co-Chairs aimed at finding solutions to these issues and hopes that, as a result of concerted action by all participants, the progress on these items could be further consolidated.

The Georgian side believes that further progress should be achieved with regard to the release of the persons illegally detained for crossing the administrative boundary line. Limited progress achieved in this field last week was marred by the recent detentions undertaken by the Russian FSB border guards illegally deployed along the occupation line. It is imperative that all detained persons be released immediately and without preconditions, as called for on numerous occasions by various international organizations.

Participants agreed to hold the sixteenth round of Geneva talks on 7 June 2011.

Tbilisi, 4 March 2011